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A N S W E R

TO THE

23 Aug 9

R E F L E C T I O N S

OF THE

Right Hon. EDMUND BURKE.

By M. D E P O N T. 12

*DUPONT
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Gaetan -
Pierre - Mance*

WITH THE ORIGINAL NOTES.

D U B L I N;

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M, DCC, XCI.



A N S W E R
O F
M. D E P O N T,
TO THE REFLECTIONS OF
The RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE.

M. DEPONT, the young Gentleman to whom Mr. BURKE addressed his celebrated Pamphlet on the Revolution in France, was some time ago in England, and he had the honour to enjoy the hospitality of Beaconsfield. On the late great event in France, he wrote a letter to Mr. BURKE, requesting that as he had learnt the first rudiments of Government at his table, he would favour him with his opinions on the transactions then passing in France.—Mr. BURKE, with great complacency, sat down to gratify his young Correspondent, and wrote his sentiments freely in a letter of a couple of sheets—but this letter he kept by him for a time, from a friendly apprehension, that if it fell into the hands of the violent spirits

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of Paris, M. DEPONT might fall a sacrifice to his desire of knowledge. This he intimated to M. DEPONT, who relieved him from his delicacy, by an assurance that the post was inviolable—that there was no such danger—and that there was nothing he coveted so much as the opinions of Mr. BURKE, on the scene of which all Europe was at that moment the spectator. Mr. BURKE complied, and sent him the letter; at the same informing him, that he had turned his thoughts more seriously to the subject, which he should also communicate to him. This intimation ended in the celebrated pamphlet, which, for the last three months, has been the subject of general discussion.

Mr. BURKE, from the same delicate regard to his correspondent, studiously concealed his name, M. DEPONT, however, has himself disclosed the secret, and has given leave for the publication of his answer. It is not improbable but from the same valuable source we may be honoured with the first letter of Mr. BURKE, for which we are sensible how much our readers would be indebted to us.



M. D E-

M. DEPONT'S ANSWER

T O

Mr. BURKE'S REFLECTIONS.

"S I R,

"When I last year took the liberty of asking in what manner you considered the political events of France, I certainly did not imagine that my letter could give occasion to the publication of the work you have had the goodness to send to me. I will even own, that I would not have hazarded my question had I been aware what effect it would produce, and that if your opinions had been then known to me, far from engaging you to disclose them, I should have intreated you to withhold them from the public.

"I would have represented to you that the single authority of your name would give some degree of hope to the vanquished party in France, and that to encourage that party to make new attempts, was to expose it to new dangers (1). I should have agreed with you on some of the errors which the National

nal Assembly must necessarily have committed in the midst of the agitations and shocks which that body has experienced ; but I should have laboured to persuade you that time, experience, and reflection, were the only proper correctives for these errors, and that to attempt to correct them instantly, would be to expose my country anew to the troubles and evils of every kind which for almost two years continue to afflict it, and which so cruelly distress the true friends of humanity.

“ I would have endeavoured to convince you, that the anarchy, the mischiefs of which you paint so forcibly, must be dreadfully protracted, if the only authority in which the Nation confided were made the object of attack. I might, perhaps, have been able to prevent one of the warmest friends of liberty, in his own country, from ranging himself with the Advocates of Despotism in mine (2). Yes, Sir, your susceptible and worthy heart has been too strongly affected with the evils that have attended our Revolution, not to fear exposing it to evils still more dreadful, in a manner by involuntarily serving the party which dares to wish for a Counter-Revolution, and which thinks that our Constitution *ought to be purified by fire and by blood.*

“ This motive, Sir, I am confident, would have determined you to preserve silence, if you had not been afraid of the re-action of the transactions in
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our country upon your own: This sentiment, which may be perceived in the course of your work, ought to be deeply impressed on the mind of every good Englishman, and the apprehension of seeing his country abandon a real blessing for an ideal and remote advantage, appears to me very natural.

“ I will even own, Sir, that at the hazard of appearing a bad patriot to some of the innovators, the greater part of whose sentiments I have adopted, I would have strenuously opposed every sort of change in France, if our former Government had been as good as yours, and if our individual liberty had been equally secured. But can we really, Sir, compare the situation of the two countries? I am very far from thinking that a Revolution is at all times, or in all respects, a happy event (3). But was it not become indispensable in France at the moment at which it happened? It was not the 5th of October, on which it was effected, as you appear to suppose, by not looking for its origin to an earlier period, and detaining us so long on the detail of that dreadful day, the account of which ought to be torn from our history. The Revolution was already effected, and the events of the 5th and 6th of October, added to every other species of atrocity, the most absolute inutility. It was on the days of the 13th and 14th of July 1789 (4), that the contest originated between oppressive authority, and rising liberty; it was at this moment that the
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French nation expressed its sentiments with the greatest energy, and obtained the most complete triumph. Trust me, Sir, since that period good citizens have frequently lamented the abuse of their power by some malicious or misguided individuals, who can by no means be confounded with the body of the people, except by their enemies, who have an interest in representing them in the most odious point of view. You are too just, and too impartial, Sir, to attribute to the nation the crimes committed on the 5th and 6th of October; and you know me sufficiently to be convinced, that I entertain the same sentiments as you, with regard to this melancholy transaction, which you so pathetically describe.

“ But permit me, Sir, to remind you of some facts which happened previous to those days, and which have been mis-stated to you by some Frenchmen, whose interest it was to represent France, such as it ought to have been, and not such as it really was at the opening of the States General. France, you say, needed then only to pay some new taxes in order to bring the public receipt and expenditure to a level. But did not the people, Sir, already groan under the load of subsidies so much the more oppressive, that they were exacted by the most arbitrary government? Had not a National Bankruptcy been already pronounced by an *Arret* of Council (5)? You talk of laws, of religion, of opinion, which
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tempered the effects of despotism, and made it exist rather in appearance than in reality (6). Laws, Sir! But had not the most respectable laws, and till that instant the most sacred, been violated? Was not Justice herself dumb? Anarchy prevailed in every part of the realm (7). Religion! But did it temper in France the effects of despotism in the period of ignorance, fanaticism, and superstition (8). Opinion! But was it not in general then express in opposition to the existing form of Government (9)? Were not men who are now most divided in interest, then united by the common interest of resisting oppression? Did not the officers, who complain with so much force and so much justice of the want of subordination among the soldiers, set the example of resistance to the execution of arbitrary and illegal orders? Did not the Magistrates, who most condemn the reprehensible excesses of the people, then regard them as indispensable (10)? Was not the insurrection general against that Government, which you find so favourable to the population, commerce, and prosperity of the empire? Ought it not then to be granted, Sir, by every person who has been able to trace in this country the series of political events, and who has no interest to ascribe the Revolution to other causes, that the deposed Government could no longer subsist (11)?

“ But you, Sir, say, that instead of making innovations, we should have endeavoured to reform,

form, and improve (12). How! the firm and courageous man, who rose with so much vigour against the abuses of his own country; the man, who in the Parliament of England, on the 11th of February 1780, pronounced these remarkable words:

“ There is a time when men will not suffer
 “ bad things because their ancestors have suffered
 “ worse.—There is a time when the hoary head
 “ of inveterate abuse will neither draw reverence,
 “ nor obtain protection*.

“ Some valuable persons, respected by both parties, were of opinion that the ancient division of orders ought to be replaced by a second Chamber, nearly similar to that which exists in your country. But, without examining the great question, whether the unity of the Legislative Body, with proper restrictions and modifications, is not preferable; without referring to the particular circumstances which gave the people reason to apprehend that the Nobility, who had shut them out from admission to all employments, might, when they again appeared in a different form (13), take occasion to usurp the same advantages; ought it not to be admitted, that the excessive eulogiums, which were

* Speech of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke on presenting a Plan for the Œconomical Reformation of the Civil and other Establishments.

given to your Constitution, were more calculated to prevent us from accepting than to persuade us to adopt it (14)? Free nations are too zealous easily to yield to their neighbours any superiority, especially in what respects their Constitution.

"I have hitherto, Sir, endeavoured to prove to you, that if the Revolution of France did not commence with you till the moment at which the Clubs of London and Dr. PRICE took it under consideration, with us it goes back to a period much more remote, and that its origin must be sought before the crisis, at which the States General being convoked, the part of the nation the most numerous, the most unfortunate, and the most oppressed, had recorded their desire, that the votes should be collected individually by orders, in instructions very different from those in which you see only a desire of reforming some abuses. I will not, Sir, attempt to reply to the different articles of your work, I should too evidently injure the cause, which I wish to defend, by entering the lists with you. This noble and glorious task I leave to some man more worthy of being your antagonist, and will content myself with communicating to you some hasty reflections, intended to convince you that my love for Liberty has not been weakened by the incidental oppression of some individuals; that the horrors, with which the past troubles have inspired me, has tended only to increase my fear of seeing them renewed, and that your charge against Dr. Price, of

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taking the deviation for the principles themselves, is not applicable to me (15).

" You lament, Sir, the weakness of the executive power, and the influence of the Committees of the National Assembly ; these are circumstances which I also lament, but I do not think it necessary to excite a civil war in France, in order to restore an order of things, to which reason must naturally lead (16).

" You lament, Sir, the poverty of the people for the present moment, and I likewise lament it : But I rely much on the means which will be suggested by that Committee* (17), the institution of which you seem to condemn ; and I am of opinion, that in order to restore peace to the country, and recal emigrants, we ought not to excite fresh troubles (18).

" You lament the suspension of public credit ; and I, Sir, likewise lament it : But I do not think that the best method of reviving it is to attack the different operations of the National Assembly, and to persuade the landed and monied interests that they are necessarily enemies, when, in fact, they must stand or fall together (19).

" You lament, Sir, the defection of the troops ; and I also lament it : But I have recovered confi-

* The Committee of Mendicity.

dence from the conduct of the National Guards, and the troops of the line in the affair of Nancy, and from the sincere repentance of the fleet at Brest; and I am convinced that a common danger will always unite all Frenchmen (20).

“ You lament the scandalous spectacle exhibited to all Europe by the intestine divisions of the Members of the National Assembly; and I no less lament it, and frequently have felt the most poignant regret, in seeing some Frenchmen, unworthy of the name, calumniate, and shamefully traduce their country. But does not even the impunity of such men prove their liberty? And can a man, separated from us only by some miles, maintain, that an Assembly is not free, when he knows that one of its Members proposed, with vehemence, in that very Assembly, a plan for a counter-revolution, and that it was listened to with coolness (21)?

“ You lament the rigour with which the Ecclesiastics have been treated; and I, Sir, also lament it: But I cannot see how religion is attacked, or Atheism established, because the salary of public Ministers, employed in the service of devotion, is not large (22).

“ You complain of the organization of the Judiciary Power; and I, Sir, find it not free from defects: But for these I am consoled by the ease with which they may be rectified, and by the great

advantage acquired in the institution of Juries, of which you speak not a word (23).

" You lament the violation of feudal property ; and I likewise regret the misfortune of some individuals (24) : But I think that there still remains another method of indemnifying them, without invading the property of M. M. de la ROCHEFOUCAULT, de NOAILLES, and de la BORDE.

" You lament the creation of paper money ; and I, Sir, likewise lament it : But I am consoled by the reflection, that it is only temporary (25), and that it tends to facilitate an operation productive of the greatest advantages.

" You find the number of municipalities too great ; and I am of the same opinion : But I think that it will be more easy to diminish, when the people shall perceive that it is their true interest (26),

" You are afraid of the National Militia ; and I also might entertain the same fears, if I thought they were to continue on their present footing, and did not know that their speedy organization will quickly dispel all apprehensions from that quarter.

" I am not so much alarmed as you, Sir, about the progress of the new political machine ; and I am of opinion, that when once the principal wheels shall have been put in motion, the rest will easily follow,

follow. In fine, Sir, I am inspired with the highest confidence from the progress of that enlightened spirit, which you have so cruelly attacked, and from the liberty of the press, upon which you have not touched; and I am convinced that these economists, these philanthropists, these philosophers, upon whom you speak with so much asperity, will contribute as much, by their writings, to the support of liberty, and the re-establishment of order, as those famous paladins, those knights errant, whose extinction you deplore, and whose very institution proves that it was always necessary to oppose armed force to the excesses of a people more formidable, in proportion as they were less enlightened (27)

"I hope, Sir, that you find in this letter only the simple expression of the most genuine regard for liberty, and that you will not discover the language of a man blinded by the spirit of Party. I will never be subservient to the ambitious views of Ministers or of demagogues (28), but, I will always defend the Constitution, which I have sworn to maintain. I wish not to exalt myself to the character of a reformer of mankind, or a missionary of the new French Institutions. I believe, that an inhabitant of the Canton of Berne, or that an Englishman, may be free and happy, notwithstanding the apparent Aristocracy of their Constitution but I think, that a Frenchman, who should despair of the safety of his country, and endeavour to foment new disturbances, would be the most culpable of men, whilst

whilst the sage Englishman, who wished to prevent those divisions ready to break out in his country, would discharge the most sacred of duties. I flatter myself, Sir, that this opinion will coincide with your own, and, that in spite of our seeing the same object in opposite points of view, so natural in our different situations, you will preserve the same friendship which you testified for me during my residence in England. I entertain the hope of being able to visit it in the spring, and there renew to you the assurance of the sentiments," &c. &c. &c.

F I N I S

N O T E S.

(1) Experience has proved, that the fears of M. DEPONT were groundless. The work of Mr. BURKE has not more than that of M. CALONNE, revived the hopes of the mal-contents. All that they have written is to be found in books published every day; the period is fortunately past, when authority was attached to great names; nothing but argument can now operate to produce conviction. All the works which preach a Counter-revolution are regarded by men of sense in the same light, as those which preach what they call a *supplement of the Revolution*, namely a massacre, or insurrections, such as happened at Aix, and in Quercy. I hope that we are approaching the moment, when both shall be equally harmless.

(2) This want of consistency is very common in France. I have frequently remarked, and without doubt, it must have occurred to others, that those people who had often talked in raptures of the exertions of the English, and particularly of the Americans, to acquire liberty, who said that these nations were fortunate enough in having been able to arrive at it through oceans of blood, lamented, or pretended to lament, the evils with which its introduction had been attended in France. Nothing is so common as friends of liberty among the Ancients,

ents, and in Foreign Nations, who do not chuse to make the smallest effort to secure it at home. Liberty, however, can only be established in opposition to difficulties, as a robust and sturdy oak grows in spite of the rocks, which obstruct its roots.

(3) It is because a Revolution is not always, and in every instance a happy event, that they ought to be very cautious of attempting a change in the Government now established in France. Be assured, that if it be bad, it will not subsist; time, and a very short time only, are necessary to do it justice: Any efforts which could be made to destroy it would only have the effect to substitute one much worse; for it would be established in the midst of greater difficulties, and after longer convulsions.

(4) I have pointed out the commencement of 1788, as the true epoch of the Revolution, and I persist in that opinion. It was then that the people acquired the knowledge of their own power; they learned that nothing was wanting on their part but inclination, in order to obtain justice against their oppressors. With such a conviction, it was impossible to deceive them longer; nor could the Bastille be allowed to stand. It was in 1788 that the insurrection commenced; it was then indispensably necessary, and became every day more so, till the month of July 1789. It was still necessary to struggle against the artifices of some Ministers; but these obstacles have been much exaggerated.

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When I speak of the People, and of their power, I mean the whole body of the Nation, who alone have the right of making an insurrection, of destroying one government, of substituting another, of removing and punishing their oppressors. Every part of the people is subject to the whole; the sovereignty resides in the nation at large: It delegates some functions; it intrusts some rights; the most frequent and sometimes dangerous abuse is made of the words Nation, People, Sovereignty, &c. It is every day said, that the Municipal Officers, the Administrators, &c. are the Representatives of the People. It is not true. The Municipal Officers, like the Judges, Administrators, Bishops, Curates, &c. are persons entrusted with the exercise of functions established by the constitution. I do not know if it would be hazarding an idea, to say, that they differ only from the officers of whom the constitution has delegated the nomination to the KING, in the circumstance of being differently elected; the one are appointed by the District, the other by the KING. The constitution gives the District the right of choosing such officers, and the KING the right of naming others, and neither are representatives. The Legislature alone represents the People; it alone speaks and stipulates in their name; the Nation alone is Sovereign; every part of the Nation is subject. These principles are too little attended to; to me they appear not foreign to this discussion. The insurrection of 1788 and 1789, is the work of the People; the revolt of the

5th of October is the work of some suborned ruffians, and some misguided individuals.

(5) M. DEPONT might have added, that if the *States General* had consented to furnish means to equal the receipt to the expenditure, the extravagant depredations of persons about the Court, would soon have occasioned new wants, equally reasonable with the former, and which must have been provided for in the same manner. It is false besides, that it was only necessary at this period to furnish new Imposts. It is evident to every sensible man, that the whole machine wanted reformation; the papers alone, which are so frequently mentioned, and so little understood, prove that the intention of the people was to restore the Monarchical Government to its true nature, and to disengage it from the shackles of all sorts, which had been imposed by the Clergy and Nobles.

(6) No government is called despotic, which does not quickly become so in reality. It may be laid down as a general rule, that there subsists despotism, when the agents of authority cannot be legally compelled to repair the damage and injury, which they have occasioned to a Citizen. Despotism then subsisted in France, when no Minister, Intendant, or Deputy of an Intendant, could be prosecuted. I ought to add, that despotism would still subsist, if the Committee of Researches, the Municipalities, and the National Guards could not be punished for every arrest, and every exercise of their authority, not only unjust, but illegal. I
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invite the friends of freedom, to concur with all their might to put a stop to an order of things, which circumstances of the greatest extremity scarcely justify ; it is by speedily finishing the plan of the Constitution, by organizing all the powers, that this terrible arm shall be taken away from the factious, and instead of acts of arbitrary authority, the laws shall be constituted as the protectors of all. It is to this object all our wishes ought to tend.

(7) No country, without doubt, had so numerous or excellent laws as France ; but in no country were they less observed ; because those, who had the exclusive right of making them, reserved to themselves the privilege of infringing them.

(8) Religion neither prevented the despotism of Louis XI. and Louis XIV. nor the dreadful trans-
action of the league, the dragooning, &c. Religion, which is a powerful restraint upon individuals, has never been able to check Kings or Nations.

(9) It has frequently been said, that opinion prevents despotism from proceeding to the most violent excess. Without doubt a despot ought to dread the consequence of public opinion, if he should order the one half of the nation to cut the throats of the other ; yet, it is well known how few dared disobey CHARLES IX. Opinion neither prevented the insolent despotism of Louis XIV. nor the intemperate despotism of the Regent. Good institutions alone prevent despotism. Good man-

ners guard good institutions, and education produces good manners. It is the English Government, which forms the men of that country, and the men who guard the Government. In fine, it is every where affirmed that custom, religion, and opinion, temper despotism, and every where the assertion is ill-founded. I demand of Mr. BURKE, whether law, religion, and opinion, prevented the *Lettres de Cachet*, the arbitrary imposts, the militia, vassalage, exemptions, &c. and whether these constituted a real, or only an apparent despotism. Under an able Prince or Minister, there existed the despotism of an individual; but when these wanted abilities, there was an aristocracy of despots: compare the Government of Cardinal RICHLIEU with the end of that of LOUIS XV.

(10) Every body must have heard in 1788, of the Magistrates desire, and endeavours to excite a civil war; and every body must have applauded their resistance to the Ministry, and the prudence of Officers, who refused to employ force against Citizens. Why is their language now changed with circumstances? Is it because they wished to protect the Magistrates against the Court, but not the People against the Great?

(11) M. DEPONT has not mentioned the numberless obstacles, by which the Court, the Nobility, and Clergy, either openly or by secret machinations, attempted to embarrass the progress of public affairs.

affairs. History will disclose on this subject, some strange particulars, and I hope to furnish my quota of Anecdotes, but little known. In general, the influence which the errors of the Court had upon the events from the month of January to the month of July 1789, does not seem to me to be sufficiently taken into consideration: it is not perceived, that if the Minister had possessed common sense, he might have acquired immortal glory, by founding the liberty of his country; then all the advantages of the Revolution would have taken place, without any of its inconveniences; factions would not have been able to form; the factious would have been entirely destitute of weight, and even of a pretext. Many errors are imputed to the National Assembly, and with justice; they committed several, but fewer than the Minister, and the greater part of the Members had better intentions.

(12) This idea of Mr. BURKE is every where to be met with; instead of making innovations, they should only have adopted the necessary improvements. But 1st, No improvements can be made, without destroying from their roots innumerable abuses. 2dly, Have not the two privileged Orders, prevented all possibility of adopting such improvement; and has not their stubborn resistance compelled the Commons to separate themselves from them altogether? 3dly, It is not sufficiently perceived that the Declarations of the 23d of June, were a real change in the government; and yet
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these were not made by the Assembly, but by the KING himself. Indeed the Ministers were in that instance betrayed too late into an ineffectual homage to reason; they ought to have been sufficiently acquainted with men to have known that their artful present would be refused. Without doubt the refusal was proper. If a Constitution, if a Government are the simple concession of the Prince, he may, whenever he pleases, withdraw his own gift. An enlightened spirit had made too much progress at this period, to allow that the will of the Sovereign is sufficient to secure the public liberty. Without doubt, individual liberty, civil liberty may be great under a despot, but they can never be secured, except by political liberty; this last alone guards all the rest, and preserves them from every attempt of violation of royal, and even popular tyranny. Thus has it been incumbent on the National Assembly to make innovations; these innovations it was impossible to avoid, as it was necessary that they should substitute a new government, in the stead of a government already destroyed.

(13) I believe that only time and experience can resolve the question into which M. DEPONT declines to enter. What is now evident is, 1st, That it was impossible in 1789 to form two chambers; that this step would have been impolitic and dangerous: 2dly, That a part, a division of the legislative body, which should review and examine the deliberations
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of the body itself, but without *veto* might have all the advantages of a second chamber, and none of its numerous inconveniencies. I only suggest the idea, which requires long deliberation.

(14) I have already remarked that those who now praise to the skies the English government, dreaded its introduction among us, at a time, when the most ardent friends of liberty would have been happy to obtain it.

(15) There is an error in reasoning very common, but little attended to, of those who incessantly confound the Revolution with the constitution. The Revolution is the subversion of the former government; it is not the work of the National Assembly, nor of any individual; it is the action, by which the people expressed that they were weary of the yoke, and desirous of freedom; can this be imputed to them as a crime, and can their right to act for themselves be contested? The constitution is the work of the National Assembly, and yet it is not to this body that all the imperfections, which are to be found in it are to be imputed; it is to circumstances of embarrassment, the necessity of speedily framing new regulations, the weakness or disaffection of government, and the perfidy and guilt of some individuals. I would wish then that it should for once be recollected that the Revolution was necessary, and of consequence justifiable; that it is the work of the People; that the constitution is im-

imperfect, but can only be judged of by experience, and matured by time.

It is by a similar error in reasoning that the Revolution is confounded with events, which have no connection with it, such as those of the 5th of October (as has been already remarked), those of Nancy, Aix, Cahors, the Hotel de Castries, &c. &c. These are, perhaps, calamities unfortunately inseparable from every great revolution; but these are not the French Revolution; these are not, it cannot be too often repeated, the work of the nation: They are the crimes of some ruffians who may escape the punishment due to their villainy, but who cannot escape (at least so the good would wish to believe), the remorse of their own conscience, the public infamy, with which they are incessantly pursued, and the execration of all posterity. It is not recollected that no great change of Government can take place, of which all the ruffians, mal-contents, bankrupts, stock-jobbers, retainers of the court, all the dregs of the nation will not always endeavour to profit and mingle their base and unruly passions with the noble and grand passion of Liberty. All that Mr. BURKE says, in his page 92, against those people about the Court, is the most scrupulous truth. But these surely are not the persons who wished for liberty; nor did such desire the Revolution, by which freedom was to be effected, they desired only confusion and disturbances, by which they might profit: But the confusion, the disturbances,

bances, the anarchy, were not, and could not be the wish of the nation; they were wearied of oppression; they were desirous of a good Government. Every thing that has not a relation to these objects is not their work, and cannot be imputed to them.

(16) Whatever Government be adopted, it is evident that much power must necessarily be deposited in the hands of those who are entrusted with carrying it into execution. It is likewise evident, that there is no liberty in a country, where a Committee of Researches of the National Assembly can arrest or dismiss from confinement. If this order of things was permanent, we should be far from being free; but happily it is impossible that it should subsist, the imperious law of necessity must quickly produce a change. I lament still more bitterly than Mr. BURKE this situation of affairs; but I am far from supposing the evil irremediable; there is a remedy in the public interest, which appoints a protecting power repressing all private interests, but subject to the supreme controul of public interest.—I might still add, that the Agents of the Executive Power have greatly contributed to take away from its effect, by always addressing the National Assembly, when they were to act responsibly; by always consulting the Committees, who have neither the right nor power to give advice; by ridiculously affecting declamations from the tribune, which could have no influence with men of sense; in fine, by falling short of that greatness of character, without which,

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Government cannot be conducted in a season of Revolution. The conduct of M. de BOUILLE, in the affair of Nancy, is a strong proof, that if Ministers had pursued a firm and decided conduct, if they had known how to discharge their duty, they would have imposed silence upon all cavillers, upon all declaimers; they would have benefited the public, and preserved their own reputation.

(17) The Assembly, upon the report of the Committee *de Mendicité*, has ordered that a supply of 15 millions be furnished to accommodate the exigencies of the departments; the Report of the Committee is full of very enlightened views, and which might suggest ample matter for consideration. It may be asked, are the people at present as poor, as during the last years of the reign of LOUIS XIV. or during the Regency, or at the end of the reign of LOUIS XV. or even in 1786, 1787, and 1788? But at least they are at present supported by the hope of bettering their situation, and by the certainty of an œconomical Administration, upon which formerly they could have no reason to depend.

(18) Experience may be produced in favour of the opinion of M. DEPONT; the emigrations occasioned by the outrage of the Hotel de CASTRIES, have given to commerce, which had begun to revive, a blow, which it will perhaps long feel. May the friends of liberty, warned by this deplorable event,
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unite all their efforts to prevent the recurrence of a similar misfortune.

(19) If the work of M. DEPONT was of a date more recent, he might have added that credit appears to resume vigour; that the public effects acquire their true price, and will soon be perceived to be the only real and good property; every thing will tend to augment their value; the high price of the National Domains proves this fact to those, to whom before it could not have been demonstrated by the most simple theory.

(20) I believe that if all general officers act like M. de ROCHAMBEAU, discipline will soon be restored in the army. Happily, however, revolts every day become less frequent.

(21) The divisions which subsist in the Assembly, need not occasion surprise, when we reflect, that it is composed of the most incoherent elements, the most heterogeneous parties; there is maintained a perpetual conflict, not only of all private interests against the public interest, but of all private interests against one another; sufficient allowance is not made for the different passions, which necessarily agitate a new Assembly, vain of its power, apprehensive of the future, and solicitous for the present. The men, of whom it is composed, are not judged such as they are; they are tried by the standard of an ideal perfection; it is not recollected that they

are regulated by circumstances, and that if they have been able to overcome some obstacles, they could not be equally successful with regard to all.

Besides the most honest men, who had the best intentions, were at the same time the most unexperienced, the least acquainted with intrigue, they were therefore most easily deceived by the artifice of the courtiers, who played upon their simplicity with great success.

It is not sufficiently perceived that there were in the Assembly few statesmen, not merely as Mr. BURKE says, on account of an improper choice, but because it was impossible to chuse properly in a country, where the Government had kept all its subjects, at a distance from public affairs, where men of the greatest abilities were obliged to affect ignorance, in order to shun suspicion. If several members have displayed in the Assembly a superiority of talents, and a depth of conception, too great a number of speakers have come forward, destitute of those powers of political combination, necessary in order to save a state, and even such speakers have not been without success. The French were so little acquainted with public affairs, that it was natural that they should mistake loquacity for talents; it was natural that they should for some time be dazzled by fluency of discourse. But the reputation of speakers declines every day; in proportion as ideas are formed, the understanding demands information, and cannot be satisfied with words.

These

These speakers, when brought in review before the judgment, are found merely to possess a fluency of words.

Every circumstance has concurred to render this session disorderly, but perhaps particularly a cause mentioned by Ductos, and deserving the attention of men of sense. "Men of superior talents," says he, "have frequently the misfortune to be associated with fools, and persons jealous of their own consequence, their equals in rank and credit, and inimical to all those views, of which they are themselves incapable.

These divisions, and this opposition, however, admit of consolation ; the approaching legislature will be more orderly : in a short time, without doubt, the party of opposition will no longer be hostile to the constitution. In a short time, as in England, all parties, whatever in other respects be their opinions, will combine their interests from the necessity of preventing a new Revolution ; they will range themselves beneath the standard of the laws, the protectors of all ; in a short time (it would be dreadful at least to lose the hope) the odious distinctions of Aristocrats and Demagogues will vanish ; the number of persons, who are still desirous of troubles, who call out fire and blood, is incessantly diminishing. Ah ! if ever united by the sacred love of our country, we in reality wished to deliver it from the fury of the factious, who mangle its bosom, it
would

would be quickly faved. May the glorious day dawn upon my eyes !

(22) I think that there ought to have been placed here an observation, which I have not met with. The Priests complained of the persecution which they have experienced, and compared their situation to that of the first Christians ; and M. MONTLAUSIER said, that they ought not to be torn from their palaces. The first Christians had no palaces ; they had not changed their wooden cross into a cross of gold ; for they had no gold. The first Christians were persecuted for their religious opinions ; it was attempted to compel them to renounce the worship of the Eternal, and to offer to false Gods, a sacrilegious incense ; modern Prelates were only required to renounce the worship of Mammon, in order to adore with humility and charity a good God, in whose presence all men are equal. They are allowed to enjoy their opinions ; the law deprives them of a part of their scandalous opulence ; there is here nothing in common with religious opinions. The first Christians obeyed the laws, they were not the preachers of revolt ; why are they not imitated by the Bishops ? In reality, no persecution has been employed. I believe, that the Assembly have carried pretty far their severity against the Titularies, but they have neither practised, nor wished to practise persecution against any individual.

(23) I believe that the Judiciary Order has very great defects ; but the institution, *Des Bureaux de Paix,*

Paix, whose benign influence has already been felt in the country, compensates a great number. And I trust, that others will in time disappear.

(24) Were a calculation to be made of the losses, which every individual pretends to have experienced, they would be found to exceed the specie circulating in Europe ; there is no person, who does not lament a loss, or boast of a sacrifice ; nineteen twenties of the amount are exaggerated. They never take into their calculation, the indemnities, which they have obtained. Thus, if a man loses a place, he does not calculate the exemption *des dixmes*, without doubt many individuals have great reason to complain ; and I firmly believe, that the number of sufferers might, and ought to have been less ; but far from still augmenting it by protracting anarchy, by again displacing those, who begin to assume a situation somewhat fixed, let us combine all our efforts to prevent new disorders.

(25) Since the date of M. DEPONT's Letter, some Assignats have been burnt ; their number is indeed small, but the very rapid sale of the National Property, gives reason to hope that they will soon burn many more.

(26) It is not merely the number of Municipalities, which Mr. BURKE attacks, it is likewise their composition ; I am of opinion that it is in several respects

respects defective, but I think it wrong to compare them to Republics ; every day they will resort more to the principles laid down in the fourth note. There will no longer exist a Municipal Power, an expression false and dangerous, which would induce to believe that the Municipal Officers have some appropriate power, whilst they are only entrusted with the exercise of functions. It is the abuse of the word Power that has created all the authority of Parliaments, which pretended to have the judiciary power. Words have great influence over men, an effect of prejudice which philosophers should endeavour to rectify. The nation delegates no part of its power to Municipal Officers or Magistrates, it only intrusts to them the exercise of a certain portion of that power, namely, the discharge of functions. Every Constitution where it is defective ought to be directed to this principle ; our Constitution deviates from it in many points, but may easily be brought back by augmenting and fortifying the action of the Districts and Departments upon the Municipalities, and that of the KING upon the Departments, and by rendering the vigilance of the Legislature over Ministers very severe and rigid. It is thus only that liberty can be established ; it cannot exist while the Municipalities claim the immediate right of watching over the agents of authority, whilst they shall denounce, &c. &c. But all these inconveniences, and a great many others, by no means exist in the constitution, and will be remedied in proportion as it is completed.

(27) Mr.

(27) Mr. BURKE is deceived, when he says, that the Revolution has destroyed the national spirit; on the contrary, I am of opinion, that it has given it a proper direction; the luxury and corruption of the Court, which had every where spread their baleful influence, had degraded the nation; every thing was to be purchased by money; money was the sole recompence of soldiers and priests; they were ambitious of honours, and of the favour of the Prince only, in order to obtain wealth; a Bishop, a General of an army were incessant in the demand of money. This vile and shameful passion had metamorphosed the French, and especially the Great, into a mere herd of Stock-jobbers on their knees before a Crown. True honour, the manly and generous French loyalty, their fidelity in observing their engagements are not destroyed, and if our manners become somewhat severe, they will not become ferocious, in spite of ruffians, and those who suborned them.

(28) Demagogues destroyed the despot; only in order to inherit the despotism; there is as much meanness in serving them as in serving Ministers; there is more pusillanimity in fearing them.

I ought here to repeat, that I did not intend to refute Mr. BURKE; but I am not afraid to assert, that

that to one, who would wish to undertake it, the task would not be difficult : he is diffuse in his principles ; he is mistaken in his facts ; his work appears to me the production of an honest man, informed of the misfortunes that have happened, but ignorant either of the ancient Government, or the object of our dispute, or the principles admitted by the true friends of the Constitution. He is not acquainted with our best authors, for he quotes none of them ; and he mentions as an authority the Revolutions of France and Brabant, by M. CAMILLE DESMOULINS ; he is ignorant of our Constitution, for he speaks of three degrees of election, which do not exist ; he attacks the division of the kingdom, which may have, and which has imperfections, but which is preferable to the former irregularity ; in a word, he incessantly takes the present state of affairs for the Constitution, and he is deceived. It advances to the proper point ; whatever may be said, it will be completed, and an enlightened spirit makes such progress, that the return of troubles appears very improbable. The Aristocrats are extinguished, the Demagogues are regarded in the proper point of view ; nothing remains but to inspire the true friends of liberty with a sufficient degree of energy to second the opinion, that it will support and bear them out upon every exigency.

Mr. BURKE is continually taking for the French nation, a vile herd of ruffians, who are guilty of outrages, and titled ruffians, still more vile, by whom they

they are encouraged, supported, and employed : If he were to spend some time here, he would see, that these are far from forming the nation, and constitute only a very small part ; he would see that true Frenchmen glow with the sacred love of liberty ; but that they are far from wishing or approving outrages ; he would see, that if they shudder with horror at the bare idea of calling down upon the factious the popular vengeance, they will not exempt them from the judgment of the tribunal of public opinion, a dreadful tribunal, and which has already done them justice. Yes, respectable Citizens will form themselves into a body, they will feel their own strength ; it is inconceivable ; they will avenge the French nation for the calumnies, of which the factious ruffians have furnished a pretext ; they will bow under no yoke : animated by their noble pride of freedom, and their high sense of honour, they will brave fanatical proscription, as they have braved Ministerial violence ; they will not desert their country ; they will defend—they will save it ; and Mr. BURKE will one day be forced to acknowledge that the French Nation was worthy of liberty ; that they knew how to acquire, establish, and preserve it in spite of Ministers, Aristocrats, Demagogues, and Ruffians.



